City of Lafayette Staff Report

For:	City Council
By:	Leah C. Greenblat, Transportation Planner
Date Written:	April 22, 2008
Meeting Date:	April 28, 2008
Subject:	Proposed Speed Limit Reduction from 45 MPH to 40 MPH on Pleasant Hill Road between Old Tunnel Road and Olympic Blvd.

Introduction

The Circulation Commission considered and recommended approval of a proposal to lower the speed limit on Pleasant Hill Road south of Old Tunnel Road to 40 MPH. An Engineering and Traffic Survey supports this reduction making it a legally defensible speed limit. Staff concurs with the Commission and recommends that the City Council adopt Resolution 2008-018 to lower the posted speed limit from 45 MPH to 40 MPH.

Discussion

At its April 7, 2008 meeting, the Commission reviewed a report, attached, and took public comment on the proposed speed limit reduction, minutes attached. There were 16 public speakers of which half supported the speed limit reduction including many speakers who requested a reduction to 35 MPH. Among the speakers opposed, several of the issues raised included:

- Allegation of establishing a speed trap,
- resistance to having to slow down,

After public comments and further discussion, the Circulation Commission voted 4 to 3 (Hughes, Sevilla and Wood opposed) to support staff's recommendation and recommend that the City Council lower the posted speed limit on Pleasant Hill Road south of Old Tunnel Road to 40 MPH.

The most recent Commission staff report summarizes how the speed limit proposal fits in with the approved corridor plan for Pleasant Hill Road. Staff is providing below our response to the comments raised and items discussed by speakers at the Commission's meeting that were not addressed in our earlier report.

Speed Traps: This is defined by the California Vehicle Code as speed enforcement using radar or some other time-space measurement methods without the justification of an Engineering and Traffic Survey. The California Vehicle Code and Caltrans Traffic Manual have specific rules and guidelines for such a survey. Chuck DeLeuw, Lafayette's Consulting Traffic Engineer, is very familiar with this information and has produced an Engineering and Traffic Survey for Pleasant Hill Road which satisfies these requirements. Mr. DeLeuw's report is an acceptable legal defense for lowering the posted speed limit.

Desirability of Slower Speeds: Pleasant Hill Road is lined with residences and residential neighborhoods exist on either side and at both ends of the roadway. Residents worked on developing a multi-phased, corridor plan whose primary intent was to slow vehicles in order to improve pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle safety and access. As a gateway to the rest of the City, the roadway can set the tone for the type of driving behavior that is desired here and in other neighborhoods. The Pleasant Hill Road corridor has historically been one of the City's high accident areas and staff is frequently requested to address a variety of safety issues along the street. Most recently the City has responded to collisions at Olympic Boulevard and collisions involving drivers hitting deer. Multiple transportation studies have shown that lower speeds are associated with less severe collisions. One study found that causalities were reduced by 7% for every 0.6 MPH reduction in average travel speed. Roughly speaking, there is only a six second increase in the amount of time required to travel the 0.6 mile roadway at 40 MPH versus 45 MPH. Yet that decrease in the speed limit is a major step toward creating a more livable community for residents immediately abutting Pleasant Hill Road and the surrounding neighborhoods. This is consistent with the principles and goals of traffic calming as applied in other neighborhoods throughout the City.

Fiscal Impact

Minimal. The cost of replacing the existing speed limit signs with new signs can be accommodated within the existing Streets Maintenance budget.

Recommendation

1. Adopt Resolution No. 2008-18.

Attachments

1. Resolution No. 2008-18
2. April 2008 Engineering and Traffic Survey
3. April 7, 2008 Circulation Commission meeting minutes
4. April 1, 2008 Circulation Commission staff report
5. Correspondence

BEFORE THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF LAFAYETTE

In the matter of:

Designating Pleasant Hill Road between Old)
Tunnel Road and Olympic Boulevard as a)
40 MPH Speed Zone) Resolution No. 2008–018

WHEREAS, staff and the Circulation Commission reviewed the speed and reported collision data as well as pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle circulation issues in the area around Pleasant Hill Road between Old Tunnel Road and Olympic Boulevard;

WHEREAS, the posted speed limit on Pleasant Hill Road between Old Tunnel Road and Olympic Boulevard is currently 45 MPH;

WHEREAS, the adjacent portion of the roadway on Pleasant Hill Road to the north of Old Tunnel Road is a 35 MPH zone and the adjoining portion of Olympic Boulevard to the southwest is a 35 MPH zone;

WHEREAS, the City developed a multi-phase plan for the Pleasant Hill Road corridor intended to improve pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle safety;

WHEREAS, the City has implemented several phases of the corridor plan and intends to continue to undertake improvements to the subject section of Pleasant Hill Road to encourage multi-modal safety and more pedestrian and bicycle usage;

WHEREAS, the implemented phases of the corridor plan have changed the physical characteristics of the roadway;

WHEREAS, the City's consulting traffic engineer has conducted an updated Engineering and Traffic Survey for the subject roadway, the basis for determining speed limits, to establish a 40 MPH zone from Old Tunnel Road to Olympic Boulevard;

WHEREAS, the Circulation Commission forwarded a recommendation to the City Council to establish a new speed zone of 40 MPH on Pleasant Hill Road from Old Tunnel Road to Olympic Boulevard;

WHEREAS, the City Council has reviewed the latest Engineering and Traffic Survey and the pedestrian, bicycle and vehicle circulation and safety issues on the subject roadway;

NOW THEREFORE, the City Council of the City of Lafayette, California RESOLVES to establish a 40 MPH speed zone on Pleasant Hill Road from Old Tunnel Road to Olympic Boulevard; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the above speed zone becomes effective once posted or otherwise designated and then the Police Services Department is directed to enforce the new speed limit regulations.

PASSED AND ADOPTED by the City Council of the City of Lafayette at a regular meeting of said Council on April 28, 2008 by the following vote:

AYES:
NOES:
ABSENT:
ABSTAIN:

APPROVED:

MAYOR Mike Anderson

ATTEST:

CITY CLERK Joanne Robbins

ENGINEERING AND TRAFFIC SURVEY

City of Lafayette

Pleasant Hill Road

Pleasant Hill Road is a major four lane arterial street extending approximately 2.5 miles between Olympic Blvd. on the south to the northerly City limits in the vicinity of Rancho View Dr. Pleasant Hill Rd. provides regional access to State Route 24 as well as serving as an important link in the local circulation system. To the south of Deer Hill Rd. the roadway is separated by a raised median while there is no such separation to the north, except in the vicinity of major intersections where protection is developed for left-turning traffic.

Pedestrian facilities exist on the east side of Pleasant Hill Rd. from Condit Road to Acalanes High School and a pathway route continues along the east side of the road as far north as Green Valley Dr. These pedestrian facilities are regularly used by students attending classes and activities at Acalanes High School. Pedestrian facilities on the west side of Pleasant Hill Rd. are not continuous north of the route 24 interchange. Pedestrian sidewalk does exist along the west side between the route 24 interchange and Olympic Blvd. Bike lanes are marked along the East side of Pleasant Hill Road from Olympic Blvd. to Mt. Diablo Blvd. and from North of Route 24 to Reliez Valley Road. Bike lanes exist along the West side between Olympic Blvd. and Rancho View Road with the exception of between Mt. Diablo Blvd. and Deerhill Road.

The entire length of Pleasant Hill Rd. does not qualify as either a "residence district" or a "business district" as defined in Sections 515 and 235, respectively, of the California Vehicle Code.

Pleasant Hill Rd. historically has experienced a high frequency of accidents. Most of the accidents occur at major intersections, such as Deer Hill Rd., Spring Hill Rd. and Reliez Valley Rd. to the north, and Mt. Diablo Blvd., Old Tunnel Rd., Reliez Station Road and Olympic Blvd. to the south. The three most prevalent collision types are right angle, rear end and fixed object.

Spot speed survey data were taken at three locations, one in the vicinity of Acalanes High School, one just north of Rancho View Dr. and the other in the vicinity of Condit Rd. The 85th percentile speeds recorded were as follows:

46.4MPH	Southbound just South of Rancho View Drive
42.9MPH	Southbound at Acalanes High School
42.0MPH	Northbound at Acalanes High School
44.0MPH	Southbound between Old Tunnel Road and Condit Road
44.9MPH	Northbound at Reliez Station Road

The majority of the Pleasant Hill Rd. alignment is basically straight with a curved section extending north of Park Lane. Hilly terrain begins in the vicinity of Reliez Valley Rd. and continues northward to Taylor Boulevard. Traffic control includes traffic signals at Rancho View Drive, Green Valley Drive, Springhill Rd./Quandt Rd.; Deer Hill Rd./Stanley Blvd.; Mt. Diablo Blvd.; Old Tunnel Rd.; and Condit Rd. The Tee intersection with Olympic blvd. is controlled with STOP signs. Speed limit signs and a variety of warning and guide signs are also present. Traffic volume along Pleasant Hill Rd. is 21,700 vehicles per day south of Old Tunnel Rd. and over 40,200 vehicles per day in the vicinity of Acalanes High School.

The 85th percentile speeds north of Old Tunnel Rd. indicate a speed limit which is at the top end of which is normally characteristic of a 35 mph speed zone. To the south of Old Tunnel Rd., a 40 mph speed limit is appropriate because of the continuing occurrence of fixed object collisions. This amounts to five of the nineteen collisions reported along this section of roadway occurring between January 2003 and June 2007.

Based upon the findings of the engineering and traffic survey, the speed limit along Pleasant Hill Rd. should be 35 mph north of Old Tunnel Rd. and 40 mph to the south of Old Tunnel Rd.

Engineering and Traffic Survey

Prepared by C. E. DeLeuw Jr. California Traffic Engineer 541

Charles E. DeLeuw, Jr.

Date: April 21, 2008

FORM PED-5
PEDESTRIAN AND SCHOOL CROSSING MANUAL
City of LAFAYETTE

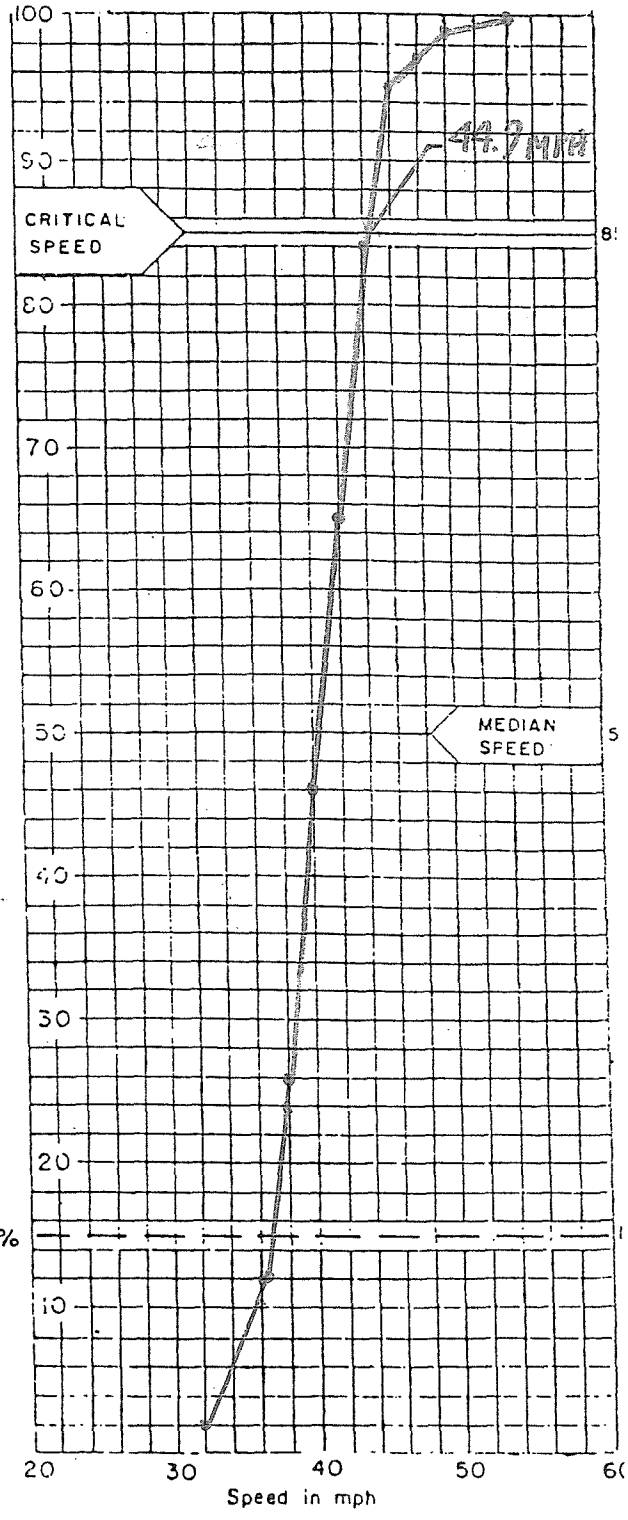
SPOT SPEED SUMMARY

MADE BY ____ DATE 3/12/08
CHECKED BY ____ DATE ____

LOCATION PLEASANT HILL Range RELIEF STATION Road
DIRECTION OF TRAVEL NB
DATE 3/11/08 DAY OF WEEK TUESDAY
PERIOD OF STUDY 10:30 AM TO 11:30 AM
SPEED LIMIT 40 MPH WEATHER CLEAR

AVG. SPEED $\bar{x} = \frac{\Sigma f_i x_i}{n} = 41.5$ MPH
10 MPH PACE 35 MPH TO 44 MPH
% IN PACE 72
% OVER PACE 16 % UNDER PACE 12

SPEED GROUP Speed Range	mid point (x_i)	Tally	Freq. (f_i)	Cum. %	$f_i x_i$	$f_i(x_i)^2$
17-(18)	18					
19-(20)	20					
21-(22)	22					
23-(24)	24					
25-(26)	26					
27-(28)	28					
29-(30)	30					
31-(32)	32	II	2	2	64	
33-(34)	34					
35-(36)	36	IIII IIII III	13	12	468	
37-(38)	38	IIII IIII II	17	26	646	
39-(40)	40	IIII IIII IIII IIII	24	46	960	
41-(42)	42	IIII IIII IIII IIII IIII	24	65	1008	
43-(44)	44	IIII IIII IIII	23	84	1012	
45-(46)	46	IIII IIII IIII	14	95	644	
47-(48)	48	II	2	97	96	
49-(50)	50	III	3	99	150	
51-(52)	52					
53-(54)	54	I	1	100	54	
55-(56)	56					
57-(58)	58					
59-(60)	60					
		Totals	123	100%	5102	
			n		$\Sigma f_i x_i$	$\Sigma f_i(x_i)^2$



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City of Lafayette
Engineering and Traffic Survey

VEHICLE SPEED DATA

Location: N/B Pleasant Hill Road @ Reliez Station Lane (S/E Corner)

Posted Limit: 45

Direction: North | Recorder: J. Shaman

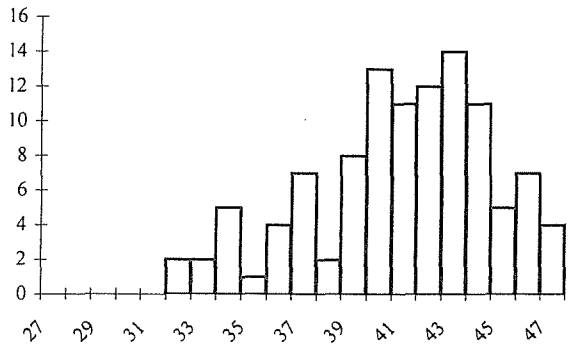
Date: 8/15/2007 | Day: Wednesday

Begin Time: 10:48am | End Time: 11:05am

Weather: Clear | Land Use: Hwy

Summary Statistics

Total Observed	117
Speed Range	32 - 56
50th percentile speed	42
85th percentile speed	46
10 mph pace speed	37 - 46
% in pace speed	77
Skewness index	0.857



Speed	Number	Speed	Number
25	0	50	1
26	0	51	2
27	0	52	0
28	0	53	1
29	0	54	0
30	0	55	0
31	0	56	1
32	2	57	0
33	2	58	0
34	5	59	0
35	1	60	0
36	4	61	0
37	7	62	0
38	2	63	0
39	8	64	0
40	13	65	0
41	11	66	0
42	12	67	0
43	14	68	0
44	11	69	0
45	5	70	0
46	7	71	0
47	4	72	0
48	2	73	0
49	2	74	0
TOTAL			117

ANALYSIS INFORMATION

Segment Length (mi): _____ ADT: _____ Count Date: 8/15/2007

Number of accidents: _____ Time period: 5 years

Calc. Accident Rate = ##### accidents per million vehicle-miles

Street Width (ft): _____ Configuration: _____ Terrain: _____

Parking Conditions: _____ Sidewalk: _____

Other Considerations: _____

RECOMMENDATION

SEAL

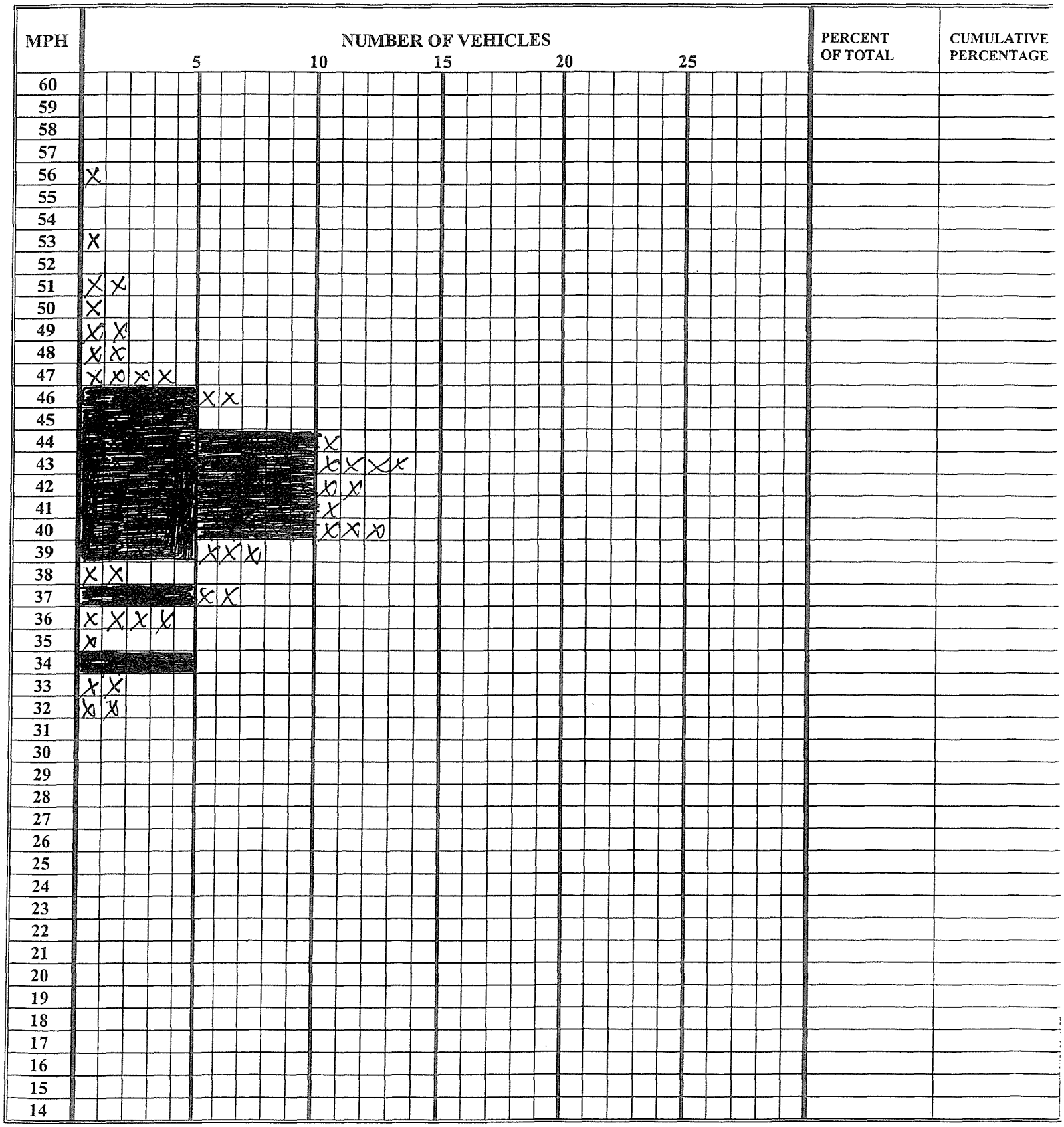
Signature: _____

Date: _____

VEHICLE SPEED SURVEY

Location N/B P. HILL RD @ RELIEZ STATION LN (S/E CORNER) Weather CLEAR / SUNNY

Recorder J. SHAMAN Date 8/15/07 Begin 1048 End 1105



City of Lafayette
Circulation Commission Regular Meeting
Minutes

Lafayette Community Center
Lafayette, CA

April 7, 2008
7:00 PM

DRAFT

1. Call to Order Chair Ross called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

2. Roll Call

Present: Chair Ross, Vice Chair Hughes, Commissioners Hiden, Holit, Poling, Sevilla, and Wood

Absent: None

BPAC: None

Staff: Ms. Leah Greenblat, Transportation Planner; Mr. Chuck DeLeuw, Consulting Traffic Engineer, Ms. Marie Pettersen, Contract Minutes Taker

3. Adoption of the Agenda

Commissioner Hiden moved and Vice Chair Hughes seconded adoption of the agenda as submitted. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

4. Public Comments

There was no public comment on an item not on the agenda.

5. Old Business

a. Proposed Speed Limit Reduction from 45 MPH to 40 MPH on Pleasant Hill Road between Old Tunnel Road and Olympic Boulevard

Ms. Greenblat reported that this item was carried over from March. Prior to 2006, the City made a number of improvements on Pleasant Hill Road including the installation of a traffic signal, pathway, and pedestrian crossing at Old Tunnel Road as part of a year-plus process to redesign the roadway to slow down traffic. A majority of the improvements have been completed while the City awaits future grant funding for later phases. In December 2006, the Circulation Commission considered reducing the speed from 45 mph to 40 mph on Pleasant Hill Road between Old Tunnel Road and Olympic Boulevard. At that time although speed data justified a reduction in the speed limit, the Commission expressed concerns regarding the time and location of the speed data collection. Staff was directed to collect new data. Mr. DeLeuw prepared an engineering and traffic survey based on the newly collected data, which justifies a reduction in speed to 40 mph. Staff is requesting the Commission to recommend to Council to reduce the speed limit to 40 mph on Pleasant Hill Road between Old Tunnel Road and Olympic Boulevard.

The Commission was handed out emails from Joan West, Jenny Kallio, Guy and Diane Atwood, and Andrew Morse.

Vice Chair Hughes asked about the actual vehicle count.

Mr. DeLeuw answered that there were 110 vehicles northbound and 108 southbound.

DRAFT

Chair Ross opened the meeting to public comment on this item.

Eric Low said he was confused about the previous surveys and the most recent survey and the substantiation to change the speed limit. The 85th percentile was an average of 44 mph with a 2% decrease northbound and a 3% decrease southbound from the previous survey. This road is still an arterial with 20,000 cars traveling along it per day plus he feels this could be a speed trap if the speed were lowered. There haven't been any substantial accidents or speed tickets given out at this location and so he sees no reason to change the speed limit. He is against changing the speed limit and handed out a copy of a traffic study that he quoted from.

Arthur Dreshfield requested the Commission reconsider reducing the speed limit. Traffic travels around 40 mph presently and that is within the 85th percentile. He sees no grounds to justify reducing the speed limit.

Tonya Ericson is in favor of reducing the speed limit to 35 mph and installing a stop sign camera. She knows of 6 accidents that have occurred in the past year. With Rossmoor on one side of the street and Acalanes High School on the other a lower speed limit is needed to make it safer to travel on Pleasant Hill Road.

Jeff Kent thanked the City for the improvements on Pleasant Hill Road so far and feels they have helped a lot. He feels lowering the speed limit is the right way to go. People tend to travel too fast in the southbound direction and statistics prove that slower speeds cause fewer accidents.

Andrew Morse sent an email to the Commission but wanted to know the reasoning for lowering the speed limit and whether there was enforcement available. He wondered why the survey was not taken during commute hours when cars are traveling at a higher speed. If enforcement were not increased, then lowering the speed limit will produce an increase in scofflaws. He would like to see an enforceable speed reduction. He doesn't want to see the impact of this speed reduction make people travel to other streets to avoid Pleasant Hill Road.

Tim Kean feels it is ridiculous to lower the speed limit. According to the engineer's report, southbound traffic travels at 44 mph which is within the 90th percentile, so why lower the speed limit? He would like to get rid of the signal at Condit and sees no basis in fact to reduce the speed limit.

Ann Porcella traveled on Pleasant Hill Road today with a far amount of traffic most of whom were traveling at 45 mph, which is a good speed for this stretch of road. She urges a recommendation to 40 mph to remind people that this is a residential area.

Bill Brobeck suggested that 35 mph is consistent with other streets surrounding this area. If the speed limit were lowered to 35 mph, they could do away with the stop light at Condit.

Mark Vaisnor opposes the speed change. The posted speed limit was established at the nearest increment of the 85th percentile and the speed limit should stay at 45 mph. The stoplight at Condit created speed control. If the speed limit were reduced, this will probably be a speed trap because he does not think the lower speed can be justified.

Carol Gray frequently walks to BART and across the road. The speed is too high and she would like to see it lowered to 35 mph consistent with the speed limit on surrounding areas. It is difficult for her to get out of her driveway because of the speeds cars are traveling. She feels the light is a big improvement. She does not think reducing the speed limit is a waste but rather is a safety concern.

Vivienne Hing uses the sidewalk and bikes every day and thanked the City for the sidewalk. The current speed limit is dangerous. She wondered why the speed limit was 45 mph when all other streets surrounding it are 35 mph. There are many houses facing Pleasant Hill Road and reducing the speed

limit 5-10 mph would make a difference for the residents. She supports lowering the speed limit to 40 mph if not 35 mph.

Krista McGuire is in favor of reducing the speed limit. She would like the speed limit lowered to 35 mph to keep the road consistent. This would make it safer for pedestrians and bikers. People speed now and this would remind them they are driving through a neighborhood. She thanked the City for all the work that has been done on Pleasant Hill Road.

Larry Alders has lived there since 1973 and travels the road every day. While he has sympathy for those who live along the road, he feels it is a very safe route. He did not understand why money was spent to install the light at Condit. He feels this is a waste of Lafayette resources and feels they should study Pleasant Hill Road from St. Mary's to the 680 freeway to see what can be done to make traffic safe there.

Christy Joe has lived there since 1959 and remembers when Pleasant Hill Road was a one-lane road on each side. She feels 45 mph is too fast and would like the speed reduced to 35 mph.

Mark Mitchell said that speed was not much of an issue and understands the need for a stop light at Condit but no matter what speed you are traveling, the light turns red. He recommends removing the resting on red feature in the Pleasant Hill direction, which he feels creates more dangerous driving. The light should rest on red in the Condit direction.

Ken Peterson feels reducing the speed limit is a bad idea. This is a 4-lane road with a median and a separate area for pedestrians and bikes and is a safe route. He would prefer traffic use Pleasant Hill Road rather than different streets. Lowering the speed limit would serve no real purpose and does not feel it would make a difference. He feels they are trying to fix a problem that does not exist.

Chair Ross closed the public comment period on this item.

Commissioner Hiden asked if it would be considered a speed trap if the speed were lowered to 35 mph.

Mr. DeLeuw responded that each area stands by itself and it would depend on the reasons the speed were reduced.

Commissioner Hiden asked if the Commission had the option to lower the speed limit to 35 mph this evening.

Mr. DeLeuw answered that lowering the speed from 45 to 40 mph would be justified but they would have difficulty justifying a 35 mph speed limit.

Vice Chair Hughes said that in reading Mr. DeLeuw's report, he questioned the definition of a 40 mph being appropriate because this is a high-design type roadway.

Mr. DeLeuw said he would do away with that part of the sentence. He noted that from 2003 to the end of June 2007, there were 18 reported accidents.

Commissioner Holit asked if these accidents occurred at the intersection of Olympic.

Mr. DeLeuw answered that there was something going on that had not been resolved. He responded to a person's questions about conducting the survey in the morning and not during peak hours. He explained that the survey is supposed to be taken at free flow times. At peak hours with a lot of traffic, it is difficult to track an individual car because of the line of cars that follow closely.

Commissioner Holit said he feels the reduction to 40 mph is warranted for safety.

Commissioner Poling concurred with Commissioner Holit. This is an arterial but that does not mean it has to be 45 or 55 mph. While the road connects to the trail and schools, there is no evidence to reduce the speed to 35 mph. She supports a reduction to 40 mph.

Commissioner Sevilla disagrees with using the light at Condit as a means to reduce speed. She loves the improvements for pedestrians and cyclists. This is a straight road with no parking and they have posted the speed limit at the 85th percentile. She would like to see the stop light at Condit activated by the side streets and not regulate the speed of the traffic on Pleasant Hill Road. They need to set speed limits and design traffic that does not make scofflaws. She feels the Condit signal has made people law breakers by rolling through the red light.

Commissioner Hiden suggested putting the timing of the signal at Condit on a future agenda.

Ms. Greenblat said after receiving a stack of material on timing issues for the signal, the Commission had decided not to take any action.

Commissioner Hiden supports the reduction in the speed limit.

Vice Chair Hughes asked about information on ticketing for speeding along this road.

Ms. Greenblat said the City does not have the ability to track tickets.

Commissioner Wood agrees with Mr. Mitchell about the light at Condit. She feels if the speed limit is reduced, people will not adhere to it. She could also see people fighting speeding tickets in court if the speed limit were lowered. This would waste the time of the few City police officers as she feels it could not be supported in court. She appreciates the input of neighbors in the area but does not support a reduction.

Chair Ross agrees with the reduction and thinks this is what a majority of the residents want. If people are presently driving under the posted speed limit, then he feels they would continue to do so if the speed limit were posted at 40 mph.

Commissioner Hiden moved and Commissioner Holit seconded approval of staff's recommendation to forward a recommendation to City Council to lower the posted speed limit on Pleasant Hill Road south of Old Tunnel Road to 40 mph. The motion was approved by a 4-3 vote with Vice Chair Hughes and Commissioners Sevilla and Wood opposed.

Ms. Greenblat said that this would go to Council and would not be re-noticed. The public can track Council's agenda online or email Ms. Greenblat to find out when this will be agendized.

Commissioner Wood asked for a rationale on the quick red of the stop light at Condit.

Ms. Greenblat said since this was a long straight shot, they wanted it resting on red. If the signal is malfunctioning, then staff will have it checked out.

6. New Business

a. Request to Address Sight Distance at the Driveway Serving 3343 Mt. Diablo Boulevard (Starbucks)

Ms. Greenblat said the Circulation Commission reviewed a development application for Starbucks, and at that time Mr. DeLeuw had some concerns about the sight distance coming in and out of the driveway. Because of concern with losing an off-street parking space, staff agreed to monitor the driveway location. The City received a request to address sight distance issues after an accident occurred at that location.

City of Lafayette Staff Report

For:	Circulation Commission
By:	Leah C. Greenblat, Transportation Planner
Date Written:	April 1, 2008
Meeting Date:	April 7, 2008
Subject:	Proposed Speed Limit Reduction from 45 MPH to 40 MPH on Pleasant Hill Road between Old Tunnel Road and Olympic Blvd.

Introduction / Discussion

In December of 2006, the Circulation Commission considered a proposed speed limit reduction from 45 MPH to 40 MPH on Pleasant Hill Road between Old Tunnel Road and Olympic Boulevard (staff report attached). At that time, although that speed data justified a reduced speed limit, the Commission raised its concerns regarding the time and location of the speed data collection (minutes attached) and directed staff to collect additional data.

As Commissioners may recall, the recent improvements made to the south end of the Pleasant Hill Road corridor (the traffic signal at Condit, the multi-purpose pathways, the new pedestrian crossing at Old Tunnel Road and the narrower travel lanes) were installed with the intent that they would transform the drivers' experience in the subject section of the roadway from a high-speed arterial to a slower speed roadway. The desired outcome of installing these improvements was the possibility that driver behavior would be modified, thus justifying a lower speed limit. The majority of construction for the first phases of the corridor was completed by 2006. Later phases of construction are pending the receipt of additional grant funds.

Staff has now collected additional speed survey data bearing in mind both the Commission's comments and the state regulations and guidelines related to speed data collection. According to Chuck DeLeuw, Consulting Traffic Engineer, the newer speed data confirm our previous recommendation regarding the reduction of the speed limit to 40 MPH in the subject area. Mr. DeLeuw prepared a revised Engineering and Traffic Survey, attached, describing the characteristics of Pleasant Hill Road and his reasoning for justifying a 40 MPH speed limit in the subject area.

In the southbound direction, the new data was collected on a Wednesday between 10:30-10:47 AM at Reliez Station Road. The vehicle speeds ranged from 31-50 MPH. Eighty percent of the drivers traveled between 36-45 MPH. The 85th percentile speed was 44 MPH.

In the northbound direction, data was collected between 10:30-11:09 AM, at Reliez Station Road on a Tuesday. The vehicle speeds ranged from 31-54 MPH. Seventy-two percent of the drivers traveled between 35-44 MPH. The 85th percentile speed was 44.9 MPH.

Staff received several pieces of correspondence, attached, regarding this matter.

Based on this speed survey and the other considerations outlined in the Engineering and Traffic Survey and consistent with the intent of the improvements to Pleasant Hill Road, staff recommends that the speed limit on Pleasant Hill Road be revised to 40 MPH.

Fiscal Impact

Minimal. The cost of replacing the existing speed limit signs with new signs can be accommodated within the existing Streets Maintenance budget.

Recommendation

1. Forward a recommendation to the City Council to lower the posted speed limit on Pleasant Hill Road south of Old Tunnel Road to 40 MPH.

Attachments

1. November 30, 2006 Circulation Commission staff report
2. Excerpt of December 4, 2006 Circulation Commission meeting minutes
3. Excerpt from California MUTCD
4. March 2007 Engineering and Traffic Survey for Pleasant Hill Road
5. Miscellaneous correspondence

c:\users\lgreenblat\documents\leah's work files\circulation commission\staff reports\2008\phr south end speed limit reduction.doc

City of Lafayette Staff Report

For:	Circulation Commission
By:	/s/Leah C. Greenblat, Transportation Planner
Date Written:	November 30, 2006
Meeting Date:	December 4, 2006
Subject:	Proposed Speed Limit Reduction from 45 MPH to 40 MPH on Pleasant Hill Road between Old Tunnel Road and Olympic Boulevard

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Introduction

Consistent with the state law methodology for setting radar-enforced speed limits, roadway speed limits are periodically updated. The existing posted speed limit on Pleasant Hill Road south of Old Tunnel Road is 45 MPH. Based on recent speed data collected, staff recommends that the Circulation Commission forward a recommendation to the City Council to reduce the posted speed limit along the subject area to 40 MPH.

Discussion

Engineering and Traffic Surveys are valid for five years and the last survey was conducted in 2001 on Pleasant Hill Road. An Engineering and Traffic Survey is required by the California Vehicle Code to set speed limits on streets that are enforced by radar. In Lafayette and most jurisdictions, radar is the most efficient and practical means of enforcing posted speed limits. State law requires that the survey justifies the posted speed limit in order to have a legally enforceable speed limit. If the survey and posted speed limit do not agree, then a traffic judge is likely to dismiss a speeding citation. As prescribed by the vehicle code and Caltrans, vehicle speeds were measured along the roadway.

The new speed data for the Engineering and Traffic Survey was collected on Tuesday, September 26, 2006. The eighty-fifth percentile speed in both directions is 44 MPH. That represents a 2 MPH decrease in the northbound direction and 3 MPH decrease in the southbound direction since the last Engineering and Traffic Survey in March 2001. The 10 MPH pace speed also went down by similar amounts. The range of speed of all drivers also decreased since 2001. In both directions, the lowest recorded speeds decreased by 4-5 MPH and the highest recorded speeds decreased by 2-3 MPH.

Based on this information, the roadway's geometrics and collision history, Mr. DeLeuw recommends in the latest Engineering and Traffic Survey, attached, that the posted speed limit south of Old Tunnel Road should be 40 MPH.

Since the roadway is currently posted as a 45 MPH speed limit, in order to lower the speed limit, the City Council must adopt a lower speed limit. A reduced speed limit is consistent with the City Council adopted Pleasant Hill Road Corridor Plan that seeks to reduce vehicle travel speeds. Staff seeks a recommendation from the Circulation Commission that would be forwarded to the City Council recommending that the posted speed limit on Pleasant Hill Road south of Old Tunnel Road be lowered to 40 MPH.

Fiscal Impact

Minimal. The cost of replacing the existing speed limit signs with new signs can be accommodated within the existing Streets Maintenance budget.

Recommendation

1. Forward a recommendation to the City Council to lower the posted speed limit on Pleasant Hill Road south of Old Tunnel Road to 40 MPH.

Attachments

1. November 9, 2006 Engineering and Traffic Survey for Pleasant Hill Road

c:\documents and settings\lgreenblat\my documents\leah's work files\circulation commission\staff reports\2006\phr speed limit reduction.doc

City of Lafayette
Circulation Commission Regular Meeting
Minutes

Lafayette Community Center
Lafayette, CA

December 4, 2006
7:00 PM

1. **Call to Order** Chair Sevilla called the meeting to order at 7:05 PM.

2. **Roll Call**

Present: Chair Sevilla, Vice Chair Ross, Commissioners Hiden, Hughes, Poling, and Wood

Absent: Commissioner Holit (excused)

BPAC: Claude Aiello

Staff: Ms. Leah Greenblat, Transportation Planner; Chuck DeLeuw, Consulting Traffic Engineer, Ms. Marie Pettersen, Contract Minutes Taker

3. **Adoption of the Agenda**

Chair Sevilla added 8D: Holiday Party.

Commissioner Hiden moved and Commissioner Hughes seconded to adopt the agenda as amended. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

4. **Public Comments**

There was no public comment on any item not on the agenda.

5. **New Business**

a. **Proposed Speed Limit Reduction from 45mph to 40 mph on Pleasant Hill Road between Old Tunnel Road and Olympic Boulevard**

Ms. Greenblat said that the state requires cities to conduct engineering and traffic studies on a regular basis if the City uses radar to enforce the speed limit. The last study conducted on Pleasant Hill Road was done in 2001, so staff conducted an update. The City uses radar for speed enforcement as it is considered the most efficient and practical method. State law requires traffic and engineering studies to justify the posted speed limits. On September 26, 2006, staff collected speed data along Pleasant Hill Road and the 85 percentile speed in both directions was 44 mph. This is a 2 mph decrease in the northbound direction and a 3 mph decrease in the southbound direction. Based on the speed data, geometric, and collision history, state law recommends what the speed limit might be. Mr. DeLeuw recommended the speed limit on Pleasant Hill Road, south of Old Tunnel Road, be 40 mph. Currently the speed limit is posted at 45 mph and in order to lower the speed limit, City Council would have to adopt a lower speed limit. A reduced speed limit would be consistent with the Pleasant Hill Corridor plan. Staff recommends the Circulation Commission forward a recommendation to Council to lower the speed limit to 40 mph on Pleasant Hill Road south of Old Tunnel Road.

Commissioner Hiden asked if the 85th percentile is doing what we want, then why do we want to lower the speed limit.

Mr. DeLeuw answered that it is a borderline figure that could go either way. Based on traffic calming, he felt the speed limit should be lowered to 40 mph.

Commissioner Poling said they are only looking at the section south of Old Tunnel Road this evening.

Mr. DeLeuw said he thought they were more recent studies done and earlier ones did not need to be updated.

Commissioner Poling said at Acalanes High School speeds were 42 mph, which according to the guidelines, the speed could be lowered there also.

Mr. DeLeuw said other factors were involved such as the school and the section with lights down to the freeway.

Commissioner Poling asked if any changes have been seen with accidents for instance since the changes that have been made in that corridor.

Mr. DeLeuw said he took a cursory look but feels it was too early to say.

Chair Sevilla opened the meeting to public comment on this item.

Detlef Curtis said he was a commuter on Pleasant Hill Road and challenges the methodology used. If the 85th percentile is 44 mph, then they should round up and not down. It is not clear when the survey was done, as there was a lot of construction going on and how that played into the figures. He said that Condit is an all red traffic signal area and cars are not going the speed limit as they come up to the signals.

Chair Sevilla asked if there was any construction going on when the survey was done.

Ms. Greenblat replied there was no construction going on as it was completed.

Ann Porcella said she was delighted the Commission was considering lowering the speed limit and feels the improvements that have been done so far have been wonderful. She is concerned about kids on bikes and thinks speed is excessive along that stretch of road. She thinks this is the only stretch of road in Lafayette that has a 45 mph speed limit and that it should be lowered.

Karla Henderlong said she was against lowering the speed limit and would like to see the speed limit increased to 50 mph. This is a major thoroughfare and link. The survey was done at 5PM at commute time and the 85th percentile was still 44 mph. She doesn't think there is a valid reason to lower the speed limit and feels they are trying to solve a problem that doesn't exist.

Arthur Dreshfeld said he lives in Rossmoor and prior to that lived in Lafayette. He is against lowering the speed limit, as he has not seen any evidence that there was a problem with public safety. It is an unsupported statement from the engineering and traffic study that Pleasant Hill Road has experienced a high frequency of accidents. Most of the accidents occur at intersections, which have a traffic light at one, and the other has a 4-way stop. It is not logical that lowering the highway speed limit but will have any effect on alleged accidents occurring there. They should evaluate the situation with the new improvements and not rush into changing the speed limit. He feels this is an arbitrary change, which would turn people off and cause people to disrespect the law.

Bob Maderious said he is in support of reducing the speed limit, as there have been numerous accidents at the intersection in the last 4 years, and many near misses. He can't see how a reduction of 5 mph would make any difference to people. It would improve public safety. Lowering the speed limit to 35 mph would be consistent with other areas nearby.

Robert Lobron said he would not support lowering the speed limit, which would reduce commute time. He feels this is unreasonable because of the improvements that have been made, which are sufficient for pedestrians and bikers.

Chair Sevilla closed the public comment period on this item.

Commissioner Wood said she was concerned with the 1% of the number of cars that travel that area in a day where they were taken at 15 minutes and 25 minutes at a busy time of day. She does not feel this is a valid representation of the speed on that street. She would like to have had more information provided at different times of the day.

Commissioner Poling said staff has been working with the neighbors and the Circulation Commission to balance the uses of the road, as it is a critical connector. If the engineering/traffic survey was done correctly then they have a supportable basis for 40 mph. She wondered where the speeds were taken.

Mr. DeLeuw said he would confirm with the police where the survey was taken.

Ms. Greenblat said the officer who conducted the engineering/traffic survey is the City's traffic enforcement officer and has done this work in other jurisdictions over a number of years.

Ms. Greenblat noted that the Commission was handed out an email from Erach Tarapore and Commissioner Hiden.

Commissioner Hughes said when he looked at the survey data on the first sheet the posted speed was noted as 35 mph.

Mr. DeLeuw replied that this was a typographical error and that the posted speed limit is 45 mph.

Commissioner Hiden said they should add in different periods of time during the weekdays and average the speeds in.

Ms. Greenblat said that this was not how the law indicated how speed surveys should be conducted.

Commissioner Hiden said she would like more information/data before making a decision.

Mr. Aiello said he did not see how lowering the speed 5 mph would affect pedestrians or bicyclists other than at crossings. He rides his bike down Old Tunnel Road all the time and has never had a problem with cars speeding.

Commissioner Hiden moved and Commissioner Wood seconded that staff should supply more data and counts at different times of the day (free-flow in the morning and afternoon staying away from rush hours).

Commissioner Hughes said he would support data collection conducted at different times of the day, and wondered if this were feasible.

Mr. DeLeuw said this was feasible but should not be precedent setting. Speed surveys are usually conducted for a short period of time.

Ms. Greenblat said the Commission could question the time of day the data was collected which was 4:40PM and then the officer relocated by 5PM to get the northbound direction. Part of the guidelines on how data is collected says that data is supposed to be collected during free-flow traffic conditions so the City may not want to conduct the survey during commute hours. The police could collect data from 10:30 - 11:30 AM when higher volumes would not be expected that would usually cause lower speeds.

After further discussion, the Commission passed the motion 5-1 with Vice Chair Ross opposed.

Commissioner Poling recommended that the data not be collected in December.

b. 2007 Circulation Commission Work Program

Ms. Greenblat said the Circulation Commission completed the Master Walkways Plan in 2006, developed the Lafayette Bike Plan, and completed the traffic calming on Moraga Blvd. Referring to draft work program Item 8: the CCTA and Measure J implementation process, Ms. Greenblat explained that at this point, the CCTA's development schedule for Measure J implementation documents is a little unpredictable and the Commission may see more of these regional items come up in the future.

Commissioner Hiden suggested adding the traffic portion of the Downtown Specific Plan.

Ms. Greenblat said she did not add this because Council has not officially said they would work on it yet.

Commissioner Hiden said they have decided that and that the process would be discussed at Council's December 11th meeting and publicly said so.

Commissioner Poling agreed that this should be kept on the Commission's radar.

Ms. Greenblat asked where the Commission wanted to add this to the work program.

The Commission agreed to add the Downtown Specific Plan as Item 11 and with the timeframe identified as TBD.

Commissioner Hiden said that ABAG housing allocations should be added on and copies of their methodology should be supplied to the Commission so that the Commission could supply additional comments.

Ms. Greenblat said Council submitted its comment letter and is waiting for a reply.

Commissioner Poling requested a copy of Council's letter before agreeing to adding that to the work program.

Commissioner Hughes moved and Commissioner Poling seconded adoption of Items 1-11 of the work program. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

Commissioner Poling requested the qualifications for teams to do the environmental work for the Downtown Specific Plan because if her firm were asked to join the team, she would not be able to discuss the item at the Commission meetings.

6. Consent Calendar

a. Minutes of November 20, 2006

b. Consideration of Trail Crossing Sign

Commissioner Poling moved and Commissioner Wood seconded to approve the Consent Calendar as submitted. The motion was approved by unanimous voice vote.

7. Staff Reports

a. Update on Recent Council Actions

City of Lafayette Staff Report

For:	Circulation Commission
By:	/s/Leah C. Greenblat, Transportation Planner
Date Written:	November 30, 2006
Meeting Date:	December 4, 2006
Subject:	Proposed Speed Limit Reduction from 45 MPH to 40 MPH on Pleasant Hill Road between Old Tunnel Road and Olympic Boulevard

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Introduction

Consistent with the state law methodology for setting radar-enforced speed limits, roadway speed limits are periodically updated. The existing posted speed limit on Pleasant Hill Road south of Old Tunnel Road is 45 MPH. Based on recent speed data collected, staff recommends that the Circulation Commission forward a recommendation to the City Council to reduce the posted speed limit along the subject area to 40 MPH.

Discussion

Engineering and Traffic Surveys are valid for five years and the last survey was conducted in 2001 on Pleasant Hill Road. An Engineering and Traffic Survey is required by the California Vehicle Code to set speed limits on streets that are enforced by radar. In Lafayette and most jurisdictions, radar is the most efficient and practical means of enforcing posted speed limits. State law requires that the survey justifies the posted speed limit in order to have a legally enforceable speed limit. If the survey and posted speed limit do not agree, then a traffic judge is likely to dismiss a speeding citation. As prescribed by the vehicle code and Caltrans, vehicle speeds were measured along the roadway.

The new speed data for the Engineering and Traffic Survey was collected on Tuesday, September 26, 2006. The eighty-fifth percentile speed in both directions is 44 MPH. That represents a 2 MPH decrease in the northbound direction and 3 MPH decrease in the southbound direction since the last Engineering and Traffic Survey in March 2001. The 10 MPH pace speed also went down by similar amounts. The range of speed of all drivers also decreased since 2001. In both directions, the lowest recorded speeds decreased by 4-5 MPH and the highest recorded speeds decreased by 2-3 MPH.

Based on this information, the roadway's geometrics and collision history, Mr. DeLeuw recommends in the latest Engineering and Traffic Survey, attached, that the posted speed limit south of Old Tunnel Road should be 40 MPH.

Since the roadway is currently posted as a 45 MPH speed limit, in order to lower the speed limit, the City Council must adopt a lower speed limit. A reduced speed limit is consistent with the City Council adopted Pleasant Hill Road Corridor Plan that seeks to reduce vehicle travel speeds. Staff seeks a recommendation from the Circulation Commission that would be forwarded to the City Council recommending that the posted speed limit on Pleasant Hill Road south of Old Tunnel Road be lowered to 40 MPH.

Fiscal Impact

Minimal. The cost of replacing the existing speed limit signs with new signs can be accommodated within the existing Streets Maintenance budget.

Recommendation

1. Forward a recommendation to the City Council to lower the posted speed limit on Pleasant Hill Road south of Old Tunnel Road to 40 MPH.

Attachments

1. November 9, 2006 Engineering and Traffic Survey for Pleasant Hill Road

c:\documents and settings\lgreenblat\my documents\leah's work files\circulation commission\staff reports\2006\phr speed limit reduction.doc

Section 2B.13 Speed Limit Sign (R2-1)

Standard:

After an engineering study has been made in accordance with established traffic engineering practices, the Speed Limit (R2-1) sign (see Figure 2B-1) shall display the limit established by law, ordinance, regulation, or as adopted by the authorized agency. The speed limits shown shall be in multiples of 10 km/h or 5 mph.

Guidance:

At least once every 5 years, States and local agencies should reevaluate non-statutory speed limits on segments of their roadways that have undergone a significant change in roadway characteristics or surrounding land use since the last review.

No more than three speed limits should be displayed on any one Speed Limit sign or assembly.

When a speed limit is to be posted, it should be ~~within~~ established at the nearest 10 km/h or 5 mph increment of the 85th-percentile speed of free-flowing traffic.

Option:

The posted speed may be reduced by 10 km/h (5 mph) from the nearest 10 km/h or 5 mph increment of the 85th-percentile speed, where engineering study indicates the need for a reduction in speed to match existing conditions with the traffic safety needs of the community.

Support:

An example of the application of this speed limit criteria is as follows:

- If the 85th percentile speed in a speed survey was 60 km/h (37 mph), then the speed limit would be posted at 35 mph or optionally reduced to 30 mph. However,
- If the 85th percentile speed in a speed survey was 61 km/h (38 mph), then the speed limit would be posted at 40 mph or optionally reduced to 35 mph.

This method of establishing posted speed limits applies to all engineering and traffic surveys (E&TS) performed after May 20, 2004. This section, as amended for use in California, does not apply to E&TS performed prior to May 20, 2004.

Examples:

- An Engineering and Traffic Survey (E&TS) performed on April 6, 1999 due for renewal on April 6, 2004 (5 years) would be performed per Chapter 8 of the 1996 Caltrans Traffic Manual, which was the applicable guidance at the time. This would then be due for renewal on April 6, 2009 using the California MUTCD criteria.
- However, if conditions of the E&TS and the applicable enforcement agency, its personnel and equipment meet provisions of CVC 40802.c.2.B.I, the E&TS could have been extended two additional years (for a total of 7 years). In this case, the posted speed limit(s) remain(s) enforceable for the seven-year period and would then be due for renewal on April 6, 2006 and would be renewed using California MUTCD criteria.
- Further, if at the end of the seven years, a registered engineer evaluates the highway section and determines that no significant changes in roadway or traffic conditions have occurred (see CVC 40802.c.2.B.II), the engineer could extend the E&TS for three additional years (for a total of 10 years). Renewal of the extended E&TS would then be deferred to April 6, 2009 and at that time performed with California MUTCD criteria.

Option:

Other factors that may be considered when establishing speed limits are the following:

A. Road characteristics, shoulder condition, grade, alignment, and sight distance;

B. The pace speed;

C. Roadside development and environment;

D. Parking practices and pedestrian activity; and

E. Reported crash experience for at least a 12-month period.

Two types of Speed Limit signs may be used: one to designate passenger car speeds, including any nighttime information or minimum speed limit that might apply; and the other to show any special speed limits for trucks and other vehicles.

A changeable message sign that changes the speed limit for traffic and ambient conditions may be installed provided that the appropriate speed limit is shown at the proper times.

A changeable message sign that displays to approaching drivers the speed at which they are traveling may be installed in conjunction with a Speed Limit sign.

Guidance:

If a changeable message sign displaying approach speeds is installed, the legend YOUR SPEED XX km/h (MPH) or such similar legend should be shown. The color of the changeable message legend should be a yellow legend on a black background or the reverse of these colors.

Support:

Advisory Speed signs are discussed in Sections 2C.36 and 2C.46 and Temporary Traffic Control Zone Speed signs are discussed in Part 6.

Speed limits in California are governed by the California Vehicle Code (CVC), Sections 22348 through 22413; also, pertinent sections are found in Sections 627 and 40802 and others referenced in this section. See Section 1A.11 for information regarding this publication.

Refer to Part 6, Section 6C.01 for speed limit signs in temporary traffic control zones. Refer to Part 7 for speed limit signs in school areas.

Engineering and Traffic Survey (E&TS)

Support:

CVC Section 627 defines the term "Engineering and traffic survey" and lists its requirements.

Standard:

An engineering and traffic survey (E&TS) shall include, among other requirements deemed necessary by the department, consideration of all of the following:

(1) Prevailing speeds as determined by traffic engineering measurements.

(2) Collision records.

(3) Highway, traffic, and roadside conditions not readily apparent to the driver.

Guidance:

The E&TS should contain sufficient information to document that the required three items of CVC Section 627 are provided and that other conditions not readily apparent to a driver are properly identified.

Prevailing speeds are determined by a speed zone survey. A speed zone survey should include:

- The intent of the speed measurements is to determine the actual speed of unimpeded traffic. The speed of traffic should not be altered by concentrated law enforcement, or other means, just prior to, or while taking the speed measurements.
- Only one person is required for the field work. Speeds should be read directly from a radar or other electronic speed measuring devices; or,
- Devices, other than radar, capable of accurately distinguishing and measuring the unimpeded speed of free flowing vehicles may be used.
- A location should be selected where prevailing speeds are representative of the entire speed zone section. If speeds vary on a given route, more than one speed zone section may be required, with separate measurements for each section. Locations for measurements should be chosen so as to minimize the effects of traffic signals or stop signs.
- Speed measurements should be taken during off-peak hours between peak traffic periods on weekdays. If there is difficulty in obtaining the desired quantity, speed measurements may be taken during any period with free flowing traffic.
- The weather should be fair (dry pavement) with no unusual conditions prevailing.
- The surveyor and equipment should not affect the traffic speeds. For this reason, an unmarked car is recommended, and the radar speed meter located as inconspicuously as possible.
- In order for the sample to be representative of the actual traffic flow, the minimum sample should be 100 vehicles in each survey. In no case should the sample contain less than 50 vehicles.
- Short speed zones of less than 0.8 km (0.5 mi) should be avoided, except in transition areas.
- Speed zone changes should be coordinated with changes in roadway conditions or roadside development.
- Speed zoning should be in 20 km/h (10 mph) increments except in urban areas where 10 km/h (5 mph) increments are preferable.
- Speed zoning should be coordinated with adjacent jurisdictions.

Support:

Physical conditions such as width, curvature, grade and surface conditions, or any other condition readily apparent to the driver, in the absence of other factors, would not require special downward speed zoning. Refer to CVC 22358.5.

Option:

When qualifying an appropriate speed limit, local authorities may also consider all of the following findings:

1. Residential density, if any of the following conditions exist on the particular portion of highway and the property contiguous thereto, other than a business district:
   a. Upon one side of the highway, within 0.4 km (0.25 mi), the contiguous property fronting thereon is occupied by 13 or more separate dwelling houses or business structures.
   b. Upon both sides of the highway, collectively, within a distance of 0.4 km (0.25 mi) the contiguous property fronting thereon is occupied by 16 or more separate dwelling houses or business structures.
   c. The portion of highway is larger than 0.4 km (0.25 mi) but has the ratio of separate dwelling houses or business structures to the length of the highway described in either subparagraph a or b.
2. Pedestrian and bicyclist safety.

The following two methods of conducting E&TS may be used to establish speed limits:

1. State Highways - The E&TS for State highways is made under the direction of the Department of Transportation's District Traffic Engineer. The data includes:
   a. One copy of the Standard Speed Zone Survey Sheet (See Figure 2B-101(CA)) showing:
      - A north arrow
      - Engineer's station or post mileage
      - Limits of the proposed zones
      - Appropriate notations showing type of roadside development, such as "scattered business," "solid residential," etc. Schools adjacent to the highway are shown, but other buildings need not be plotted unless they are a factor in the speed recommendation or the point of termination of a speed zone.
      - Collision rates for the zones involved
      - Average daily traffic volume
      - Location of traffic signals, signs and markings
      - If the highway is divided, the limits of zones for each direction of travel
      - Plotted 85th percentile and pace speeds at location taken showing speed profile
   b. A report to the District Director that includes:
      - The reason for the initiation of speed zone survey.
      - Recommendations and supporting reasons.
      - The enforcement jurisdictions involved and the recommendations and opinions of those officials.
      - The stationing or reference post in kilometers (mileage) at the beginning and ending of each proposed zone and any intermediate equations. Location ties must be given to readily identifiable physical features.
2. City and County Through Highways, Arterials, Collector Roads and Local Streets.
   a. The short method of speed zoning is based on the premise that a reasonable speed limit is one that conforms to the actual behavior of the majority of motorists, and that by measuring motorists' speeds, one will be able to select a speed limit that is both reasonable and effective. Other factors that need to be considered include but are not limited to: the most recent two-year collision record, roadway design speed, safe stopping sight distance, superelevation, shoulder conditions, profile conditions, intersection spacing and offsets, commercial driveway characteristics, and pedestrian traffic in the roadway without sidewalks.
   b. Determination of Existing Speed Limits - Figures 2B-103(CA) & 2B-104(CA) show samples of data sheets which may be used to record speed observations. Specific types of vehicles may be tallied by use of letter symbols in appropriate squares.

In most situations, the short form for local streets and roads will be adequate; however, the procedure used on State highways may be used at the option of the local agency.

Guidance:

The factors justifying a reduction below the 85th percentile speed for the posted speed limit are the same factors mentioned above. Whenever such factors are considered to establish the speed limit, they should be documented on the speed zone survey or the accompanying engineering report.

The establishment of a speed limit of more than 10 km/h (5 mph) below the 85th percentile speed should be done with great care as studies have shown that establishing a speed limit at less than the 85th percentile generally results in an increase in collision rates; in addition, this may make violators of a disproportionate number of the reasonable majority of drivers.

Support:

Generally, the most decisive evidence of conditions not readily apparent to the driver surface in collision histories.

Speed limits are established at or near the 85th percentile speed, which is defined as that speed at or below which 85th percent of the traffic is moving. The 85th percentile speed is often referred to as the critical speed. Pace speed is defined as the 16 km/h (10 mph) increment of speed containing the largest number of vehicles (See Figure 2B-102(CA)). The lower limit of the pace is plotted on the Speed Zone Survey Sheets as an aid in determining the proper zone limits. Speed limits higher than the 85th percentile are not generally considered reasonable and prudent. Speed limits below the 85th percentile do not ordinarily facilitate the orderly movement of traffic and require constant enforcement to maintain compliance. Speed limits established on the basis of the 85th percentile conform to the consensus of those who drive highways as to what speed is reasonable and prudent, and are not dependent on the judgment of one or a few individuals.

The majority of drivers comply with the basic speed law. Speed limits set at or near the 85th percentile speed provide law enforcement officers with a limit to cite drivers who will not conform to what the majority considers reasonable and prudent. Further studies show that establishing a speed limit at less than the 85th percentile (Critical Speed) generally results in an increase in collision rates.

Option:

When roadside development results in traffic conflicts and unusual conditions which are not readily apparent to drivers, as indicated in collision records, speed limits somewhat below the 85th percentile may be justified. Concurrence and support of enforcement officials are necessary for the successful operation of a restricted speed zone.

Guidance:

Speed zones of less than 0.8 km (0.5 mi) and short transition zones should be avoided.

Signs

Standard:

The Speed Limit (R2-1) sign shall be used to give notice of a prima facie or maximum speed limit except as provided under Prima Facie Speed Limits in CVC 22352.

When used, the TRUCKS, 3 AXLES OR MORE 55 MAXIMUM (R6-3(CA)) sign shall be installed approximately 230 m (750 ft) following each R2-1 sign.

The ALL VEHICLES WHEN TOWING 55 MAXIMUM (R6-4(CA)) sign shall be installed approximately 230 m (750 ft) following the R6-3(CA) sign.

Guidance:

The R6-3(CA) and R6-4(CA) signs should be placed on highway segments where speeds in excess of 90 km/h (55 mph) are permitted.

Option:

The existing AUTOS WITH TRAILERS, TRUCKS 55 MAXIMUM (R6-1(CA)) sign may remain in place until it is knocked down, damaged, stolen, vandalized, or otherwise reaches the end of its useful life.

The local California Highway Patrol office may be consulted to identify highway segments where enforcement is an issue. On these segments early replacement of existing R6-1(CA) signs may be necessary.

Support:

Refer to CVC Section 22406 for types of vehicles subject to the 90 km/h (55 mph) maximum speed limit.

Greenblat, Leah

From: Greenblat, Leah
Sent: Tuesday, April 01, 2008 2:22 PM
To: 'dporcell@comcast.net'
Subject: RE: reducing speed limit on Pleasant Hill Road

Dear Ms. Porcella,

Thank you for your email. I will provide a copy of it to the Circulation Commission who will be meeting on April 7 to consider making a recommendation on the matter to the City Council. The meeting will be held at 7pm in the Manzanita Room at the Community Center at 500 St. Mary's Road.

Sincerely,

Leah Greenblat
Transportation Planner
City of Lafayette

-----Original Message-----
From: dporcell@comcast.net [mailto:dporcell@comcast.net]
Sent: Monday, March 31, 2008 3:58 PM
To: Greenblat, Leah
Subject: reducing speed limit on Pleasant Hill Road

Dear Ms. Greenblat,

Absolutely should the speed limit be reduced to 40 mph on Pleasant Hill Road between Olympic and Mt. Diablo Blvd!
With the new landscaped walking paths and beautiful trees this stretch of Pleasant Hill Road has the look of a lovely boulevard. As it runs through residential neighborhoods speeding should be discouraged and scenery enjoyed.

Sincerely,
Ann Porcella
1034 Lindsey Court
Lafayette

Greenblat, Leah

From: Greenblat, Leah

Sent: Tuesday, March 25, 2008 3:12 PM

To: Buck Hughes (flatheadbuck@yahoo.com); Cindy Sevilla (friendofpets@yahoo.com); E.Poling@FehrandPeers.com; Gene Holit (ggholit@comcast.net); Leah Greenblat; Lynn Hiden; maryjanewood@kpmg.com; Michael Ross (mike@michael-ross.net)

Subject: FW: Speed Limit Reduction on Pleasant Hill Road - 45 to 40

FYI: A copy of this email will also be in your packet.

Leah Greenblat
Transportation Planner
City of Lafayette

From: Greenblat, Leah
Sent: Tuesday, March 25, 2008 3:11 PM
To: 'Leslie Weaver'
Subject: RE: Speed Limit Reduction on Pleasant Hill Road - 45 to 40

Dear Ms. and Mr. Weaver,
Thank you for your email. I will forward a copy to the Circulation Commission. Due to an unexpected situation, staff had to cancel the last meeting. This item will now be discussed at the Commission's April 7 meeting.

Leah Greenblat
Transportation Planner
City of Lafayette

From: Leslie Weaver [mailto:leslie.weaver@crgfunds.com]
Sent: Tuesday, March 25, 2008 7:41 AM
To: Greenblat, Leah
Subject: Speed Limit Reduction on Pleasant Hill Road - 45 to 40

Dear Ms. Greenblat:

I am writing to you as a concerned resident of Buchan Drive which runs parallel to Pleasant Hill Rd. I understand that there is a proposal to reduce the speed limit from 45 to 40 and I am very much in favor of this. Though many improvements have been made along the stretch from Olympic to Old Tunnel Rd. for bike lanes and pedestrian walkways, I feel that the current speed limit of 45 produces actual speeds by motorists of 50 to 55. People always tend to drive about 5 to 10 miles over the posted speed limit and when I am out walking, I continually see many people speed along this stretch as if it were a mini highway. Our kids rode their bikes every day to Stanley Middle school and I can tell you that not a day went by that I didn't worry about them on this road. The speed with which drivers zoom down the road has always been excessive and I welcome any reduction in speed no matter how small.

The noise factor would also be greatly reduced and I think I can speak for all residents in our neighborhood that this too would be a most welcome improvement to our quality of life. Again, we are very much in favor of this proposal and are very hopeful that it will pass.

Sincerely yours,

Leslie & John Weaver
1010 Buchan Drive

Greenblat, Leah

From: Robbins, Joanne
Sent: Monday, March 17, 2008 8:30 AM
To: 'Silloo Tarapore'
Cc: _Council; Greenblat, Leah
Subject: RE: Pleasant Hill Road Speed Limit

Dear Ms. Tarapore: Thank you for your e-mail. Your letter is being forwarded to the city council and Leah Greenblat, Transportation Planner.

Joanne Robbins
City Clerk
City of Lafayette
925-284-1968

From: Silloo Tarapore [mailto:siltarapore@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, March 17, 2008 12:25 AM
To: Robbins, Joanne; Coe, Tony
Subject: Pleasant Hill Road Speed Limit

Dear Lafayette City Council Members:

I write regarding the proposal to change the speed limit on Pleasant Hill Road from 45 m.p.h. to 40 m.p.h.

I feel this is a bad idea because Pleasant Hill Road is a major road with four lanes and a divider. It is perfectly reasonable to allow a 45 m.p.h. speed limit on such a road. Some years ago, the residents in the development around Condit agitated to have a new traffic light installed to ensure that drivers do not exceed the posted speed limit. This was done. Why now must we re-visit the same issue and lower the old speed limit?

Ensuring safe driving is certainly a worthy goal but there is nothing to be gained by choking major streets with unnecessary regulations and angering safe, law-abiding drivers. In the last few years, Lafayette has continued to install STOP signs and speed bumps upon the recommendation of people who live on that street. We seem to forget that a street belongs to the public and not merely to those who live on it.

I would like to add, that as elected officials, I look upon **you** to govern for the greatest good of the greatest number. As a member of the public, it is not possible for me to attend meetings, and write letters to ensure that overbearing regulations are not passed at the whim of a few residents. Many Lafayette families have two working parents who also work very hard to raise children. These families look to you to keep in check the others who work towards self- serving regulations.

I urge you to leave the speed limit on Pleasant Hill Road at 45 m.p.h. It strikes a good balance between safety and flow of traffic.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Silloo Tarapore
595 Michael Lane
Lafayette

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Greenblat, Leah

From: Robbins, Joanne
Sent: Monday, March 17, 2008 10:22 AM
To: 'Erach Tarapore'
Cc: _Council; Greenblat, Leah
Subject: RE: Reducing speed limit on Pleasant Hill Road

Dear Mr. Tarapore: Thank you for your e-mail. Your letter is being forwarded to the city council and Leah Greenblat, Transportation Planner.

Joanne Robbins
City Clerk
City of Lafayette
925-284-1968

From: Erach Tarapore [mailto:erachtarapore@yahoo.com]
Sent: Monday, March 17, 2008 10:02 AM
To: Robbins, Joanne
Subject: Reducing speed limit on Pleasant Hill Road

To the Lafayette City Council:

It is my understanding that Pleasant Hill Road (PHR) was designed and built as a major, four lane, arterial road and given an appropriate speed limit of 45 mph. It seems that there are interests at work to choke traffic on this route. I hope the City council will resist these interests.

These same interests were successful in installing a timed traffic light on PHR some time ago. The timing is set so that the speed of an oncoming car has to be about 42 mph (less than the current speed limit of 45 mph) for the light to remain green. So already there is a covert challenge to the posted speed limit. Now a further, overt, challenge is being mounted.

The sign posting the council meeting was overturned on Olympic Boulevard during the course of the day on Sunday. Was this a move by the above interests to limit knowledge of today's hearings so fewer people would show up?

In my understanding, the City Council are the elected representatives of the citizens of Lafayette. If not a single person shows up at the meeting, it does not mean that the items on the agenda are not of interest to the many. They are present in YOU their elected representatives. By holding hearings on issues of narrow self interest, and then considering turn-out in coming to your decision, you shirk that responsibility of representation. Please stand up to these interests and maintain smooth traffic flows through Lafayette. Keep the speed limit at 45 mph.

Sincerely,

Erach Tarapore
595 Michael Lane

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Greenblat, Leah

From: Robbins, Joanne
Sent: Monday, March 17, 2008 12:17 PM
To: 'Shenaya Tarapore'
Cc: _Council; Greenblat, Leah
Subject: RE: speed limit on Pleasant Hill Road

Dear Ms. Tarapore: Thank you for your e-mail. Your letter is being forwarded to the city council and Leah Greenblat, Transportation Planner.

Joanne Robbins
City Clerk
City of Lafayette
925-284-1968

From: Shenaya Tarapore [mailto:shenayat@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, March 17, 2008 11:57 AM
To: Robbins, Joanne
Cc: Coe, Tony
Subject: speed limit on Pleasant Hill Road

Hello,

I am opposed to lowering the speed limit on Pleasant Hill. The stop light that was installed at Condit has effectively lowered it. If you go anything above 42 or 43, it trips, turns red, and hampers the flow of traffic anyway.

It is up to the city council to represent Lafayette residents as a whole, and not simply accommodate a few citizens. Pleasant Hill Road is a major through way and its many users trust the council to keep their interests at heart though they may not have time to show up to meetings.

Sincerely,
Shenaya Tarapore
595 Michael Lane
Lafayette

Greenblat, Leah

From: Robbins, Joanne
Sent: Tuesday, March 18, 2008 8:39 AM
To: 'craig_isaacs@comcast.net'
Cc: _Council; Greenblat, Leah
Subject: RE: Pleasant Hill Road

Dear Mr. Isaacs: Thank you for your e-mail. Your comments are being forwarded to the city council and Leah Greenblat, Transportation Planner.

Joanne Robbins
City Clerk
City of Lafayette
925-284-1968

-----Original Message-----
From: Craig Isaacs [mailto:craig_isaacs@comcast.net]
Sent: Tuesday, March 18, 2008 12:26 AM
To: Robbins, Joanne
Subject: Pleasant Hill Road

Hi -

My name is Craig Isaacs, and I live at 11 Hartwood Ct, Lafayette.

I've just learned the Circulation Committee is now requesting you reduce the speed limit on PHR to 40MPH even though the road can obviously support the current 45MPH rate: there's a physical barrier between N and S lanes, and the lanes are wide enough to support 45MPH.

You've already made Lafayette residents waste time, natural resources, and money by placing a purposely mis-timed signal on PHR. Now this. Do you think a majority of Lafayette residents really want either the signal or the change in speed limit? Of course not.

The speed limit reduction is yet another Bad Idea from the Circulation Committee.

Please reject the proposal.

Thank you.

Craig Isaacs

P.S. Did you know one reason people vote down road bonds is we don't like what you do with the money you already have? That includes the ineptly timed and deployed signals on Mt. Diablo, PHR, and more. Telling people the money comes from "different funds" doesn't matter -- we'd rather there weren't any funds for some of the recent "improvements."

33

March 17, 2008

Detlef K. Curtis
3268 S Lucille Lane
Lafayette, CA 94549

Ms Leah Greenblat
Circulation Commission
City of Lafayette
3675 Mt Diablo Blvd.
Suite 210
Lafayette, CA 94549

Via Fax Only: 284-3169
One page

RE: Pleasant Hill Road Speed Limit Reduction Agenda Item

Dear Ms Greenblat,

It appears that the speed reduction efforts by the City are underway yet again. Close examination of "new" information provided in the report does not appear to justify any tinkering with the currently posted speed limits. In addition some of the same questions raised initially are still with us:

1) The current version of the City's Engineering and Traffic Survey Report provides very little new data but a fair amount of very sweeping generalization about traffic accidents at intersections without referencing specific accident data and placing this accident information in the context of road ADT or peak hour volumes.
2) Why have any speed surveys been taken in vicinity of Condit intersection, when the motoring public is now more keenly aware than ever of the random nature of red light (slowing approach speed) on Pleasant Hill Road traffic? It has been my contention all along that this "speed control device" would be used to institutionalize a speed pattern which could then be used to justify lower posted limits.
3) Last, but not least, the cited 85th % figures, despite Condit signal, support the appropriate placement at the speed limit at 45mph.

Perhaps the City of Lafayette should place more resources in a study to assess the need for a traffic signal at the Olympic Blvd intersection. This is an intersection for which a portion of a traffic signal has already been funded through the (now, not so new) development on the south side of this intersection.

Sincerely,

Detlef K. Curtis, PE

Greenblat, Leah

From: brian baker and linda murphy [bakemurph@yahoo.com]
Sent: Tuesday, March 25, 2008 12:13 AM
To: brian baker and linda murphy; Greenblat, Leah
Subject: Circ Comm - 4/7 meeting, Pleasant Hill Road - 40 mph
Attachments: 3062307051-Circ comm PHRd 40 mph speed limit.doc

Hi Leah.
Please see the attached letter in Word in support of the proposed reduction in the speed limit along PHRd. Please provide our letter to the circ comm. (Please discard our earlier e-mail from a week or two ago, as this letter replaces that and includes additional comments we would like the commission to consider.)
Thank you.
Linda Murphy

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March 24, 2008

RE: Pleasant Hill Road – Reduction Of Speed Limit

Ms. Greenblat and Circulation Commission members:

We wholeheartedly support the recommendation to lower the speed limit along Pleasant Hill Road between Old Tunnel and Olympic to 40 mph. We think this will improve the safety of this road for motorists, as well as for pedestrians and bicyclists.

The multipurpose path has been a great addition to this stretch of road, but the absence of a path from Reliez Station Road to Olympic on southbound Pleasant Hill Rd and the absence of a path from Olympic to Condit on the northbound Pleasant Hill Rd makes reducing the speed limit to 40 mph very important. We've been delighted to see young and old using the multipurpose path. We travel this road frequently - both in our car and on foot and bike -- and we think the slight delay in the average commuter's trip resulting from lowering the speed limit is far outweighed by the benefit to the community. A lower speed limit will further encourage use of the multipurpose path and get people out of their cars and onto their feet and bicycles, which is so beneficial for all.

We also believe a lower speed limit will improve the safety of this part of Lafayette for motorists. Cars often travel 10 miles over the speed limit – which means that some cars travel 55 mph along this stretch of the road. We have found southbound cars tend to start speeding just south of Acalanes High School (where the speed limit is 35 mph) in anticipation of the higher speed limit. This has posed safety issue, especially where cars are merging on or off hwy 24 or onto Mt. Diablo Blvd. from southbound Pleasant Hill Road. We also have found northbound cars maintaining a high speed after crossing Old Tunnel Road, even though the speed limit drops to 35 mph, which makes entering Pleasant Hill Road from Old Tunnel Road more difficult to safely judge. In addition to making this stretch of road safer, the 40 mph speed limit would promote a smoother transition to the 35 mph speed limit near the busy intersections on the north and south part of this stretch of road and increase the safety and encourage more moderate driving on these neighboring roads.

Thank you for considering our comments.

Linda Murphy and Brian Baker, 1025 Buchan Road, Lafayette

Greenblat, Leah

From: Greenblat, Leah
Sent: Tuesday, March 18, 2008 4:01 PM
To: 'Ted Michon'
Subject: RE: Pleasant Hill Road Speed Limit

Thank you for your email. I will provide the Circulation Commission with a copy of your correspondence. Due to an unexpected emergency, the Commission meeting on March 17 was canceled. This item will be rescheduled for the next Commission meeting on April 7, 2008. I apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.

Leah Greenblat
Transportation Planner
City of Lafayette

From: Ted Michon [mailto:tedmichon@gmail.com]
Sent: Monday, March 17, 2008 3:35 PM
To: Greenblat, Leah
Cc: Me
Subject: Pleasant Hill Road Speed Limit

Leah,

I am a resident of 3171 Stanwood Lane, perpendicular to Pleasant Hill, and I support the speed limit reduction. Personally, I have a hard time getting up to 45 MPH, and it feels unnatural when I do. I am a somewhat aggressive driver, so that is saying something. Also, I have kids who commute via bike along Pleasant Hill. The bike lanes make it pretty safe, but I am of course interested in anything that would make it safer for them.

Thanks, Ted Michon

--
Ted Michon | Work (415) 646-8185 | Cell (415) 260-7238 | EMail tedmichon@gmail.com

Greenblat, Leah

From: Greenblat, Leah
Sent: Tuesday, March 18, 2008 3:58 PM
To: 'Lynn Hiden'; Mike Grant
Subject: RE: Pleasant Hill Road 45 to 40 MPH Speed Change

Thank you for your email. I will provide the Circulation Commission with a copy of your correspondence. Due to an unexpected emergency, the Commission meeting on March 17 was canceled. This item will be rescheduled for the next Commission meeting on April 7, 2008. I apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused.

Leah Greenblat
Transportation Planner
City of Lafayette

From: Lynn Hiden [mailto:dandlhiden@comcast.net]
Sent: Monday, March 17, 2008 8:42 AM
To: Greenblat, Leah
Subject: Fw: Pleasant Hill Road 45 to 40 MPH Speed Change

Leah, would you please forward this email from Mike Grant to the commissioners for tonite's meeting?
Thanks,

Lynn
----- Original Message -----
From: Mike Grant
To: Lynn Hiden
Sent: Monday, March 17, 2008 6:20 AM
Subject: Pleasant Hill Road 45 to 40 MPH Speed Change

Lynn - I can't be at the meeting tonight. This proposal is solid and I support it fully. I lived on the road for approx. 15 years. It was a two-lane rural road through a pear orchard that, unfortunately, became the road it is today. The speeds on the road have been the cause of many accidents including two vehicles that left the pavement and ended up in the backyards of Buchan Drive homes. Looking at the minutes from the last meeting I didn't see that anyone had actually calculated the "delay" the 40 MPH limit would create. The segment from Olympic to the 35 zone before Old Tunnel is approx. 1/2 mile. That calculates to a five (5) second increase in travel time over the segment. How anyone can claim this is a significant (if even measurable) delay in their overall commute/trip with a straight face is beyond me. Thanks. Mike.

Brian Baker and Linda Murphy
1025 Buchan Drive, Lafayette, CA 94549

April 22, 2008

RE: Pleasant Hill Road – Speed Limit Reduction to 40 mph

Dear City Council Members:

We strongly support the recommendation of city staff and the circulation commission that the speed limit along Pleasant Hill Road between Old Tunnel Road and Olympic Blvd. be lowered from 45 mph to 40 mph. We believe the speed reduction will help make this stretch of road and the surrounding streets safer for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

Lafayette city staff has done a remarkable job securing grants to pay for the numerous improvements to this stretch of road: the signal at Condit, the multipurpose path, the designated bike lane, and the landscaped medians. All of these have improved this part of Lafayette. As a result, more people are walking, running, and biking along this stretch of road. This means people are getting out of their cars and getting exercise – both of which are in the spirit of Lafayette "Going Green." In a city sorely lacking in park space, this Pleasant Hill Road promenade offers many of the advantages of a park: exercise, beautiful landscaping, and a sense of community. Lowering the speed limit will only enhance the experience and encourage even more people to get out of their cars.

The reduction of the speed limit from 45 mph to 40 mph is supported by the most recent speed survey. From our understanding, that means that a 40 mph speed limit is radar-enforceable. The question is now a policy one: Should Lafayette lower the speed limit along this 0.7-mile stretch of road? We and many others believe the answer is Yes.

There are many advantages to a lower speed limit: it will be safer for motorists, bicyclists, and pedestrians traveling on and or across this road. At Old Tunnel Road, the speed limit is 35 mph. Just north, at Acalanes High School and at Springhill Elementary, the speed limit is 25 mph when children are present. Just south, at Olympic Blvd. heading toward Burton Valley, the speed limit is 35 mph, but then changes to 25 mph at Reliez Station Road. Lowering the speed limit to 40 mph will discourage people from treating this stretch of road as a freeway onramp or offramp. This is a main arterial road, but it also runs through a neighborhood and contains a pathway used by young and old to access the Lafayette Moraga Trail and a bike lane used by many bicyclists from the surrounding areas. Many children bike along this stretch of road and cross the street at Condit to reach Stanley Middle School. By making this street safer, more parents will be comfortable with their children biking to Stanley or to the trail. The result: fewer cars on Lafayette's streets, and fewer traffic calming problems in neighborhoods near Stanley.

The only disadvantage of lowering the speed limit will be that motorists in a hurry will have to limit their speed to 40 mph for this 0.7 mile stretch. Realistically, many

motorists routinely travel 5 to 10 mph over the posted speed limit, no matter where they drive. So these motorists will likely continue to travel at 45 mph. That seems plenty fast for even the most time-pressed of people. Lafayette police does not give tickets to people traveling slightly above the speed limit, so those concerned about speed traps need not worry. Also, because there is a speed survey to support the 40 mph limit, if cars travel 10 miles over the speed limit, Lafayette Police will be able to enforce the tickets.

The advantages of lowering the speed limit are many. The disadvantages are few. Lafayette is a city and a community. We all need to work together to make our entire city safer and more enjoyable. Throughout the city of Lafayette, traffic calming is a big concern. We all understand that we cannot expect to have traffic calmed in our neighborhood but then not respect the traffic concerns of residents in another neighborhood. In the spirit of "Slow Down Lafayette" and Lafayette "Going Green," lowering the speed limit to 40 mph is a great policy decision. We encourage you to adopt the city staff's recommendation.

Thank you for considering our comments. We plan to attend the City Council meeting to speak in support, but if the item is placed on the May 12 agenda, we will be unable to attend, as we will be out-of-town visiting family on that date.

Sincerely,
Brian Baker and Linda Murphy

Greenblat, Leah

From: Greenblat, Leah

Sent: Monday, April 07, 2008 1:16 PM

To: Buck Hughes (flatheadbuck@yahoo.com); Cindy Sevilla (friendofpets@yahoo.com); E.Poling@FehrandPeers.com; Gene Holit (ggholit@comcast.net); Leah Greenblat; Lynn Hiden; maryjanewood@kpmg.com; Michael Ross (mike@michael-ross.net)

Subject: FW: Reduction in speed limit on Pleasant Hill Rd.

FYI: I will have paper copies of this email for you at tonight's meeting.

Leah Greenblat
Transportation Planner
City of Lafayette

From: Greenblat, Leah
Sent: Monday, April 07, 2008 1:15 PM
To: 'Guy Atwood'
Subject: RE: Reduction in speed limit on Pleasant Hill Rd.

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Atwood,

Thank you for your email and for taking the time to share your thoughts on this matter. I will provide the Circulation Commission with a copy of your email so that they may consider your concerns at tonight's Circulation Commission meeting.

Sincerely,

Leah Greenblat
Transportation Planner
City of Lafayette

From: Guy Atwood [mailto:guyatw@promeetium.com]
Sent: Monday, April 07, 2008 11:53 AM
To: Greenblat, Leah
Subject: Reduction in speed limit on Pleasant Hill Rd.

Leah,

We are writing to support the reduction in speed limit to 40 mph or, if possible, 35 mph on Pleasant Hill Road between Olympic and Old Tunnel Road. My wife and I live on Springhill Road and travel regularly to Lucas Valley Road and Lucas Circle where our son and his family reside. As a result, we use Pleasant Hill Road constantly. In addition we buy many of our fruits and vegetables from the market on Olympic Blvd. And, of course I travel to the Community Center almost every week for City meetings. So, we are very familiar with this section of road.

We support the reduction for several reasons. First, all of Pleasant Hill Road, from beyond Rancho View to Old Tunnel Road, except for this portion, is 35 mph. It is confusing to drivers to have different speed limits on one road. The drivers tend to drive the faster speed the whole distance making the slower zoned areas more dangerous. This is particularly true for drivers heading in the northerly direction. In the southerly direction we have vehicles coming from Pleasant Hill and Martinez driving 55-60 mph, then having to slow down as they get to Rancho View, then speed up as they get to the freeway, or when heading to Olympic Blvd., or Moraga.

Second, the drivers heading in the northerly direction on Pleasant Hill Road from Olympic attain speeds of 50-60

mph and then do not slow down at Old Tunnel Road. This causes a further dangerous situation.

Third, most cars along Pleasant Hill Road exceed the speed limit by 5-10 mph already, and they will continue to do so even with the reduced speed. Hopefully, they will now go 45-50 mph instead of 50-60 mph.

Fourth, the slope of Pleasant Hill Road causes many vehicles to speed up unconsciously, particularly heading south. This coupled with the higher allowed speed results in vehicles going much faster than the speed limit.

Fifth, it is important to slow vehicles down heading south to prevent them from running through the gate to the housing area at the intersection of Olympic and Pleasant Hill Road.

Sixth, with the cost of gasoline, it is much more fuel efficient to discourage the drivers from "gunning" their vehicles along Pleasant Hill Road, and then have to brake for the light or for Old Tunnel Road. With a slower speed gasoline will be save and carbon emissions reduced.

Seventh, the light at Condit is set for slower speeds and a slower speed would result in a reduction of braking, speeding up and all the cursing and frustration caused by that light.

There are more reasons, but clearly there is an overpowering need to reduce the speeds along Pleasant Hill Road.

Thank you and the Circulation Commission for consideration of this request.

Guy and Diane Atwood
3345 Springhill Road
Lafayette CA 94549

Greenblat, Leah

From: Greenblat, Leah
Sent: Friday, April 04, 2008 10:30 AM
To: Buck Hughes (flatheadbuck@yahoo.com); Cindy Sevilla (friendofpets@yahoo.com); E.Poling@FehrandPeers.com; Gene Holit (ggholit@comcast.net); Leah Greenblat; Lynn Hiden; maryjanewood@kpmg.com; Michael Ross (mike@michael-ross.net)
Subject: FW: Proposed 40mph Speed Limit on Pleasant Hill Rd.

FYI I'll also bring copies of this email to Monday's meeting.

Leah Greenblat
Transportation Planner
City of Lafayette

-----Original Message-----
From: Greenblat, Leah
Sent: Friday, April 04, 2008 10:30 AM
To: 'Andrew Morse'
Subject: RE: Proposed 40mph Speed Limit on Pleasant Hill Rd.

Dear Mr. Morse,

Thank you for your email and sharing your thoughts with us. I will provide the Circulation Commission with a copy of your email in preparation for its public meeting on April 7 when the Commission discusses the matter. The meeting agenda and staff report for this item are available on the City's web site at www.ci.lafayette.ca.us

Leah Greenblat
Transportation Planner
City of Lafayette

-----Original Message-----
From: Andrew Morse [mailto:aalaff@comcast.net]
Sent: Thursday, April 03, 2008 9:52 PM
To: Greenblat, Leah
Subject: Proposed 40mph Speed Limit on Pleasant Hill Rd.

Dear Ms. Greenblat and Commissioners:

For the past 20 plus years we have lived on Stow Lane, which is just off Pleasant Hill Rd. During this time we have seen increased traffic volume as Moraga has grown, the expansion of St. Mary's College and, with the 24/680 corridor becoming more congested, the use of Pleasant Hill Rd.as a bypass route.

The City has made several attempts to regulate and slow ("calm") the traffic: A traffic signal at Condit Dr.; Rupple strips at the intersection of Olympic and Pleasant Hill Rd.; Reduced traffic lane widths by increasing the landscape and bike/pedestrian lanes. As a non-scientific observation, I have seen that the signal has had some affect on slowing traffic to Condit. However, after that, vehicle speeds increase to Olympic and on to the intersection of Olympic and Reliez Station ("Snake Hill"). The rupple strips have no affect as the drivers maintain their speed through it.

Vehicle speed is a problem, especially for the residents turning off to Reliez Station. With the addition of the bicycle lane and landscaped areas, we lack a deceleration lane. We can only hope that drivers are alert to our attentions and will slow down.

However, regarding the reduction in the speed limit to 40 mph, I don't think that a 5 mph drop will make much difference. People will still

drive at least 45 mph. A more meaningful drop would be to 35 mph; then the traffic might slow to 40 mph. But, given that Pleasant Hill Rd. is 4 lanes wide, this configuration only encourages higher traffic speeds.

If the City enacts the new speed limit, how is going to be enforced? Do we have the extra police patrols available to constantly monitor the speed? Are we creating an unenforceable law?

There are other alternatives available: Reduce the street width to two lanes; Install a stop sign at Reliez Station Rd; Install a signal at Olympic; Install a signal at Olympic and Snake Hill. However, I fear that any forced reduction in speed will push the vehicles onto Relize Station Rd., impacting Stow, Carl and the other lanes off Reliez. This segment of Reliez Station cannot handle any additional traffic.

In closing, as much as I would like to slow the traffic on Pleasant Hill, it is and will remain a thoroughfare to Moraga and Walnut Creek. No amount of speed engineering will change that. Reducing the speed limit will only create more scofflaws. If the City and the citizens want to significantly reduce vehicle speeds then a more comprehensive traffic management plan must be considered.

Andrew Morse
957 Stow Lane
(925)934-2488

Have you heard of this organization?

Received 4/7/08 Circ. Com. Mtg

Speed Limits

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A Recommended Speed Zoning Practice

January, 1996 Draft Version

It should be noted that this report from the 4M-25 Committee on Speed Zoning, a part of the Institute of Transportation Engineers, is a draft version and is not yet an official ITE recommendation. Permission to post this on this web site was granted by the committee.

Introduction

The purpose of speed zoning as stated in the Uniform Vehicle Code is to establish a speed limit which is "reasonable and safe for a given section of roadway." There are at least two difficulties when interpreting this statement. The first is a question of "reasonable to whom?", and the second is the implication that there is truly a cause and effect relationship between speed limits and safety.

It is clear from the controversy surrounding the use of speed zones that there are differences of opinion as to what is a reasonable speed among drivers, residents, legislators and enforcement officers. Thus, compliance with the vehicle code in determining the appropriate speed limit to post in a speed zone requires a definition of the term "reasonable speed."

The use of speed zones to increase safety depends on the assumption that a direct relationship exists between a change in the speed in the speed limit and a change in driver behavior which results in increased safety. Changing speed limits alone seldom changes speed characteristics of the traffic stream, indicating that this assumption is likely invalid. In fact the net result of current practice which results in decreasing the speed limit is that a higher percentage of the drivers are now in violation of the speed limit, while their speeds have not changed. It is improbable that this results in increased safety. It may only serve as an ineffective substitute for other traffic engineering measures that could result in increased safety.

However, speed zoning as a traffic engineering tool should not be ignored. It is widely used, and many states, counties and cities have developed policies and guidelines for the implementation of speed zones. Speed zoning, when properly applied and enforced, contributes to highway safety.

Inconsistencies in Speed Zoning

In a survey conducted by this committee, the most frequently cited reasons for establishing speed zones is to increase safety and to inform the motorist of the reasonable speed for this segment of the road. However, there are serious inconsistencies in the practice of speed zoning which make it difficult to justify speed zoning as either a safety measure or a means of communicating the reasonable speed to the motorist. These inconsistencies are described as follows:

SEARCH SPEED LIMITS

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THE NMA'S POSITION

Speed limits should be based on sound traffic-engineering principles that consider responsible motorists' actual travel speeds. Typically, this should result in speed limits set at the 85th percentile speed of free-flowing traffic (the speed under which 85 percent of traffic is traveling). These limits should be periodically adjusted to reflect changes in actual traffic speeds.

INFORMATION

Speed Limit Studies
State Speed Limit Chart
NMA's Model Speed Zoning Law
State Speed Zoning Standards
A Recommended Speed Zoning Practice
The Truth About Speed Limits
Do Speed Limits Matter?
Restoring Speed Limit Credibility
Safety & Setting Speed Limits

RELATED LINKS

Understanding Highway Crash Data
Learn the basics of highway crash data.

State Traffic and Speed Laws
Detailed list of state traffic laws, including links to actual state statutes.

Speed Trap Registry
See speed traps around the United States and Canada. You can even add to the list.

SENSE
Research by a Canadian group that advocates reasonable speed limits.

Speed Limits Page
Research and useful links from the

45

1. Location of Speed Zones. Even though traffic engineers and the public both perceive speed zoning to be a safety tool, such zones are frequently established primarily in response to citizen demands rather than where an accident or accident potential problem exists. It is not surprising, then, that studies of accident reductions resulting from speed zoning are inconclusive. If speed zones are to be an effective safety device, the profession needs consistent guidelines, based on an engineering analysis, to determine where and when to establish these zones.
2. Speed Limits. Most traffic engineers support the use of the 85th percentile speed as a basis for determining the appropriate speed limit. However, the majority of posted speed limits in speed zones nationwide are much lower than the 85th percentile speed and in many cases lower than the average speed. The limits are often set to reflect either legislatively created limits or simply to accommodate the demands of the public. The profession also needs to be consistent in applying guidelines for posting speed limits in speed zones. Uniformity in the application of traffic control devices is one of the goals of the traffic engineering profession.
3. Enforcement tolerance. This final inconsistency refers to the practice of enforcing the speed limit in speed zones. Where speed limits are artificially low, the enforcement tolerance must be high. Since enforcement action against a large proportion of a traffic stream is not possible, the enforcement tolerance must be increased when the speed limit is set below the 85th percentile speed. While a large tolerance may be necessary for zones where the speed limit is artificially low, it is not appropriate to use this same tolerance where the speed limit is set at or near the 85th percentile speed. Since all speed zones have identical signing, the motorist cannot distinguish between the two types of speed zones.

Rationale for Consistent Speed Zone Guidelines

Several studies have demonstrated that drivers who travel either slower or faster than the 85th percentile speed of the traffic stream have a higher accident involvement rate than those drivers whose speed is close to the 85th percentile speed. Posting the speed limit at the 85th percentile speed informs the motorist of the speed which is expected to minimize their risk of an accident. Thus, the overriding basis (from a safety perspective) for speed zoning should be that the creation of the zone, and the speed limit posted, reflects the maximum speed considered to be safe and reasonable (i.e., the 85th percentile speed).

A second rationale for consistency in speed zoning practice is the desire for equitable treatment of motorists. When speed limits are set artificially low, and enforcement action cannot be directed at all the violators, the enforcement officer has too much discretion in selecting the motorists to be penalized. The cost of being selected can include both a fine and an increase in the cost of insurance. This type of enforcement ultimately leads to poor public relations for both the traffic engineering agency and the enforcement agency.

Reasonable Drivers Unanimous site.

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Fighting Speeding Ticket
Ex-Traffic Cop Reveals How To Fight Your Speeding Ticket and Win...
FightTheSpeedingTicket.com

Speed Tables
Traffic Calming Devices to Slow Residential Traffic. Learn More!
www.trafficlogix.com

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A third rationale is the need for consistency between the speed limit and other traffic control devices. Signal timing and sight distance requirements, for example, must be based on the prevailing speed of traffic. If these values are based an a speed limit that does not reflect the prevailing speed of traffic, safety may be compromised.

If speed zones are to fulfill their intended function as a traffic control device used to enhance highway safety and operations, these inconsistencies must he eliminated. As currently practiced, speed zoning violates one of the basic traffic engineering premises stated in the national *Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices*: "..uniformity means treating similar situations in the same way. The use of a standard device does not, in itself, constitute uniformity. A standard device used where it is not appropriate is as objectionable as a nonstandard device..."

The most desirable method of eliminating these inconsistencies would be to require all speed zones to be based on an engineering study and to enforce all speed limits with equal rigor. Unfortunately, traffic engineers, enforcement agencies and the courts seem to be moving in the opposite direction, with more speed zones being established based on other criteria, more speed limits being set incorrectly, and greater tolerance in the enforcement of these speed limits.

Guidelines

The following guidelines will provide a consistent basis for the application of engineering principles to speed zoning.

1. Speed zones shall only be established on the basis of an engineering study. Each speed zone should be periodically restudied to determine that the established speed limit is appropriate. The suggested maximum interval is five years. In addition, an engineering study should be conducted whenever there is a change in the roadway that would affect the prevailing speed. Such changes would include elimination of parking, added lanes, signal coordination, changes in roadside development, etc.
2. The engineering study include an analysis of the current speed distribution of free- flowing vehicles. The speed limit within a speed zone shall be set at the nearest 5 MPH increment to the 85th percentile speed or the upper limit of the 10 MPH pace. No speed zone shall be established in a location where the 85th percentile speed is within +/- 3 MPH of the statutory speed limit. The existing speed limit within a speed zone shall not be changed if the 85th percentile speed is within +/- 3 MPH of the posted speed limit.
3. The engineering study may include other factors such as:
    1. Geometric features including: vertical and horizontal alignment, and sight distance;
    2. Roadside development;
    3. Road and shoulder surface characteristics;
    4. Pedestrian and bicycle activity;
    5. Speed limits on adjoining highway segments:
    6. Accident experience or potential.

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However, in no case should the speed limit be set below the 67th percentile speed of free flowing vehicles.

4. Speed zones should not be used to warn motorists of hazardous conditions. If a hazardous condition exists within the road segment under study, this condition should be corrected or an appropriate warning sign in conjunction with an advisory speed plate should be posted.
5. Enforcement of speed limits within speed zones should be uniform. Efforts should be made to coordinate the implementation of speed zones and the enforcement policies with the governing enforcement agency.

Legal Issues

In addition to the application of the Speed Zoning Guidelines, some changes in laws or ordinances would be required to eliminate inconsistencies in speed zoning. This would include the codification of the requirement for engineering study, justification of speed zones as well as a requirement for a periodic restudy. It should also include some distinction in terms of enforcement. For example, on roadways where these guidelines are not followed, enforcement should only be based on violation of the Basic Speed Law. [NMA's Model Speed Zoning Law meets these requirements.]

Definitions

As used in this document, the following terms are defined as:

1. Speed zone - A section of street or highway where a speed limit different than the statutory speed limit has been established.
2. Speed limit - The maximum (or minimum) speed permitted on a section of street or highway. This limit may be statutory or it may be established within a speed zone on the basis of an engineering study.
3. Basic Speed Law - no person shall operate a motor vehicle at a speed greater than is reasonable and proper for the prevailing conditions.
4. 85th (67th) percentile speed - The speed at or below which 85 (67) percent of the sample of free flowing vehicles are traveling. This speed should be determined by conducting a spot speed study following the procedure contained in the Manual of Transportation Engineering Studies. *[Note: The 85th percentile speed would be the maximum speed limit, and the 67th percentile speed would be the minimum speed.]*
5. Pace - The 10 MPH band of travel speeds containing the largest number of observed vehicles.
6. Advisory speed - The speed at which a specific feature along the street or highway may be traversed.
7. Tolerance - the numerical difference between the speed limit and the minimum speed at which enforcement action is taken.

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Bibliography

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4. Manual of Transportation Engineering Studies, 1st Edition, 1994.

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